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Additional Unemployment Benefits Available

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Douglas announced today that the Vermont Department of Labor has notified nearly 1,100 individuals of their potential eligibility for additional unemployment benefits. Potentially eligible individuals have been mailed a notice instructing them how to begin receiving benefits next week. In most cases, they will simply file their weekly claim between Sunday and Friday as they have done in the past. The additional benefits result from Vermont reaching federally established unemployment rate triggers.

These additional unemployment benefits, known as “2nd Tier EUC” became available to states with “high unemployment rates” when the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act was amended on November 21, 2008. Triggering onto the 2nd tier will provide those qualifying workers up to an additional 13 weeks of benefits in addition to the 20 additional weeks of extended benefits already in place.

“During these difficult times it can take longer to find new employment” said Governor Douglas. “These additional benefits will give unemployed workers the assistance they need to provide for their families and continue looking for their new job,” added the Governor.

Labor Commissioner Patricia Moulton Powden added that her department is working to make filing for these additional benefits as simple as possible. “We are working to keep this simple and worry free. It will be important for individuals who receive the notice to follow the instructions provided. These instructions will enable most folks to restart their claim without contacting the Claims Center if they have not worked since they last filed a weekly claim.”

Eligibility

In most cases, the 2nd Tier EUC benefits will be available to individuals who have exhausted all regular state and the initial 20 weeks of federally extended unemployment benefits. Qualifying individuals will continue to be eligible for up to 13 additional weeks provided they do not become eligible for regular benefits and Vermont's insured unemployment rate remains at or above a 4% three month average.

Individuals found eligible for emergency benefits will be paid the same weekly benefit amount as previously paid under the state program. The Stimulus bill President Obama signed on Tuesday extended the date for qualifying for Emergency Unemployment Compensation through December 31, 2009.

How to Apply

Individuals who are currently receiving emergency unemployment need not do anything. In most cases, the Unemployment Insurance Division will adjust their benefit balance. In all cases, individuals who qualify or could potentially qualify for the extended benefits will receive a notice providing them with filing instructions or advising them of the increased benefit availability.

Financing

The benefit and administrative costs of emergency benefits are paid for from funds appropriated from the Federal Unemployment Trust Fund and do not impact the state unemployment trust fund.

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